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PP RUEHDT RUEHPB  
DE RUEHWL #0069/01 0230402  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3759  
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 4706  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0159  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 0633  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 0033  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0560

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000069

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STATE FOR EAP AND EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEAN](#) [NZ](#) [FJ](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: EAP DAS DAVIES MEETING WITH NZ FOREIGN MINISTER  
PETERS

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Classified By: DCM David J. Keegan,  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary: NZ Foreign Minister Peters met January 17 with EAP DAS Davies. Peters stressed that it is in New Zealand's interest to have a strong relationship with the United States. He also expressed appreciation for his meetings with the Secretary. Peters said he understands that New Zealand needs to do its part to find new areas for cooperation and a better tone for the relationship, but he added that the GNZ will need to accrue positive results from closer US-NZ ties to help convince the Kiwi public of the benefits. Davies agreed that both sides need to show the benefits of renewed engagement and suggested that improvements should be made incrementally. Reviewing regional issues, Peters told Davies that he believes Fijian strongman Frank Bainimarama was not solely responsible for the Fijian coup, but had strong financial interests behind him. Peters also said Pacific Island Country (PIC) leaders could benefit from meeting with the Secretary if it proves impossible for the President to meet with them following next September's APEC Summit. Peters expressed concern that the recent failure of the UNSC Burma resolution will be seen as a victory by the dictators in Rangoon. Davies suggested it will assist ASEAN partners in the longer term in pressing the military junta for change. End Summary.

12. (C/NF) New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters flew from his home in Auckland to Wellington to meet EAP DAS Glyn Davies in the airport just before Davies flew to Christchurch for his trip to the Antarctic. Peters returned to Auckland immediately after for a knee operation. Davies thanked Peters for flying down from Auckland specifically to meet with him. He also thanked Peters for his helpful public statement after Minister Jim Anderton, who was Duty Minister at the time, condemned the President's new Iraq initiative (septel). Peters responded that it is important that New Zealand "raise its game" with the U.S., because a strong relationship is in NZ's regional and global interests. Expressing appreciation for his meetings with the Secretary, Peters said he would like both sides to "stop behaving like people at a country dance who don't speak frankly" and noted his wish to return to Washington in the coming months. Davies asked whether relations with the United States would again be injected into the next general elections. Peters said he hoped not, but added that to a politician, winning is everything. The best way to improve the tone of the

relationship is to give politicians some positive benefits from stronger US-NZ ties that they can explain to the electorate. Davies acknowledged the point, but said that improvements have to be made "brick by brick." Words cannot come ahead of deeds.

13. (C/NF) Peters praised the greater emphasis that Washington is now paying to the Pacific Island Countries (PICs), and said if the President can't meet with PIC leaders around the time of the APEC Summit they would also get a lot of value from a meeting with the Secretary if her schedule allows. Reviewing the state of play in the PICs, Peters said he thought the UK should be pressured to reduce some of the preferences it offers Fiji, including acceptance of Fiji military into the UK armed forces. He said that "unless you squeeze Frank (Bainimarama) he won't change." Peters said he suspects that despite claims to the contrary, Bainimarama was not solely responsible for the coup, but was acting with strong financial interests behind him, including foreign investors. Describing Tonga as locked in a 1770s mind set, Peters said it is likely the new King will eventually implement political reforms because otherwise he will lose power.

14. (C/NF) Peters, who had just attended the ASEAN/EAS meetings in Cebu, asked Davies why the United States had pressed for a UNSC resolution against Burma, knowing it would fail. Stressing that he was not criticizing the U.S., Peters said that he worries that Burma will be emboldened by the failed UN vote. "To a dictatorship, any point scored is a point." Peters added that Burma is used to being isolated and ignored. He said talking with them might be a better approach, as to isolate the country further could turn it into another North Korea. Davies responded by reviewing the growing interest of several ASEAN countries to press for change in Burma. He suggested that the UNSC resolution had

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strong backing and, even though it was vetoed, gave those more activist ASEAN partners additional ammunition to use in pressing the Burmese military junta for change.  
McCormick